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# Strategies for Hiring Skilled Furniture Manufacturing Workers

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Michael Simmons

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Strategies for Hiring Skilled Furniture Manufacturing Workers

by

Michael Simmons

MS, Walden University, 2011

BS, Park University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2018

## Abstract

In April 2013, the U.S. unemployment rate was 7.6% and did not drop as quickly in the recent recession as in past recessions. The Unemployment and Job Creation Program study informed readers that many employers could not find qualified workers. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore hiring managers' strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. The target sample included 3 furniture manufacturers located in Huntsville, Alabama who have successfully developed and implemented strategies for hiring skilled workers. The skill shortage theory was the conceptual framework for this study. In the job market, skill was a persistent theme in the discussion of unemployment. The data collected resulted from face-to-face interviews with 3 managers in the furniture manufacturing business, transcribed interview responses, company documentation, and observation notes. Data analysis included an assessment of word frequencies, keyword coding, and theme identification. The findings included 4 themes: strategy, effective strategy, barriers, and mitigation. Implementing these recommendations may increase managers' effectiveness in hiring. Implications for social change include establishing a credible hiring strategy that provides an opportunity for increasing local employment. The benefits of industries implementing an effective hiring strategy are community awareness and less local unemployment. The employment growth strengthens the community with the increase in spending which creates a thriving economy. An increase in pay provides opportunities for higher education and better provisions for employees' families.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to God and my family for their sacrifice and encouragement to complete this achievement.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks most important to Dr. Peter Anthony for your commitment to excellence and availability. Thanks for your patience and sharing the time to ensure I understood and received the knowledge to attain my goal. I also thank my committee members Dr. Romuel B. Nafarrete and Dr. Neil A. Mathur for selfless and detailed reviews.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Levanon, Cheng, and Paterra (2014) reported that the unemployment rate peaked while exposing the risk of labor shortages. The authors concentrated on measuring the risk of occupations in industries and regions by comparing the risk of 266 aggregated industries to project labor shortages in 2022. Levanon et al. chose specific occupations with a relatively high risk of labor shortages and divided the occupations into four main groups: health-related jobs; skilled labor; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) jobs; and professional occupations. Their analysis revealed that health-related occupations have higher risk but the effects of labor shortages will affect businesses and the economy significantly. The authors believed that the cause of the deterioration was the retirement of the baby boomers, which seemed to be the source of the skill shortage. The article revealed that between 1997 and 2000, despite strong revenue growth, organizations' profits declined. The significance of the article provides validity to the need for managers to create a strategy to hire skilled workers.

### **Background of the Problem**

In April 2013, the U.S. unemployment rate was 7.6% and did not drop as quickly in the recent recession as in past recessions (Shipps & Howard, 2013). The Unemployment and Job Creation Program study informed readers that many employers could not find qualified workers (Shipps & Howard, 2013). Employers complained that it was difficult to find personnel with the right skill set (Meyler, 2013). The recruitment process is one of the principal activities of an organization for checking whether this process is going smoothly or require changes for organizational growth (Bagul, 2014).

Reports showed that due to the rapid decline in the unemployment rate and the ongoing retirement of the baby boomers, the U.S. economy would likely face labor shortages in various occupations (Levanon et al., 2014).

Employers expressed their concern with society's mindset that educational institutions alone can prepare a student for the workforce (Kantane et al., 2015). Job qualifications have changed beyond having a particular skill set; students will be required to have a greater level of motivation, emotional intelligence, and attitude to compete in the labor market (Kantane et al., 2015). Moreover, effective Human Resource (HR) planning has assisted managers in locating, training, and placing employees in the right position to meet internal and external requirements while the organization tries to identify a strategy to overcome skill shortages (Hafeez & Aburawi, 2013). The competition in the labor market has caused instability and challenges for employers to hire the right person (Bálint, 2013). Limitation in resources was among fundamental properties of competition in organizations in the 21st century (Amin, Divandari, & Haghani, 2015).

### **Problem Statement**

Hiring managers' lack of strategies to locate skilled workers in the furniture industry is widespread, and employers have difficulty filling vacancies because of shortages in the U.S. labor force (Cappelli, 2015). The labor force was expected to grow only 5% per year between 2012 and 2024 (Levanon et al., 2014). The general business problem was that some hiring managers lack strategies to locate and hire skilled workers. The specific business problem was that some hiring managers lack strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore hiring managers' strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. The target population included three furniture manufacturers located in Huntsville, Alabama who have successfully developed and implemented strategies for hiring skilled workers. The findings from my study may impact social change with strategies for hiring skilled workers to support continuous employment within the local community. Organizations' recruitment can influence social change processes while assisting with the reduction of unemployment and strengthening the local economy.

### **Nature of the Study**

Using the qualitative method assists researchers in representing participants' views of the complex world of their lives (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). The qualitative method was my preferred method for data collection to answer what strategies hiring managers lack to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. Employing the quantitative method of study would have required testing hypotheses to analyze data to understand relationships and differences among variables, and therefore would not have fit the purpose of this study (McKenzie, 2015). The mixed methods approach was not appropriate for the purpose of this study because the mixed method includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection, and only the qualitative method was necessary to address the purpose of this study.

Using the case study design for this study allowed in-depth exploration of hiring managers' strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing

industry. Phenomenological researchers analyze specifics of individuals' lived experiences (Lach, 2014), and therefore a phenomenological design was not the preferred design for the proposed study. Using an ethnographic design would have required a written observation of culture in a natural setting; thus, it was not the preferred design for the proposed study. Narrative research reveals multifaceted, demonstrated, and emplaced social phenomena within a particular arena (Hunter & Emerald, 2016) and was therefore not the preferred design for this study. The case study was the preferred design for exploring manager strategies (see Garcia & Gluesing, 2013).

### **Research Question**

The research question that guided this study was “What strategies do hiring managers use to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry?”

### **Interview Questions**

1. What processes do you use for locating a skilled worker in the furniture manufacturing industry?
2. What media source(s) do you use to locate and hire skilled manufacturing workers?
3. What strategies do you use for prospect generation that is unique to the furniture manufacturing industry?
4. What target market(s) do you use to hire for skilled manufacturing workers?
5. What is your process to qualify a prospect for a furniture-manufacturing job?
6. What strategies have improved the quality of recruiting in the furniture business?

7. What industry barriers have you encountered while implementing your recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled workers?
8. How did you address the industry barriers encountered while implementing your recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled furniture workers?
9. How do you assess the effectiveness of your recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled furniture workers?
10. What additional information not addressed in the interview is pertinent to the purpose of this study?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this case study was the skill shortage theory (Green, 2013). Weaver (2015) noted that in the job market, skill was a persistent theme in the discussion of unemployment. A similar market existed for skill training and education, which closely links to the labor market. Green (2013) suggested linking the demand and supply of skills through labor markets was more productive than typical approaches through institutional networks. The concept of linking two markets displayed a full consideration of the supply and demand components that affect skill formation. Various researchers have compared and identified different strategies to improve the labor markets. Large labor markets were reported to have better matches than smaller ones for skilled workers (Kok, 2014). The standards of employees and employers increased in an abundant market where they received more choices. The skill level determines the quality of the match compared to the jobs task (Kok, 2014). The skill shortage theory applies to an exploration of strategies for hiring skilled workers to match



a required skill to an organizational job requirement (Green, 2013). The skill shortage theory shows the need to understand skills in modern society. The demand for skills have increased because of the advancement of technology and the level of education in the workforce was currently expanding (Green, 2013); therefore, an understanding of the transition is required to match skills and jobs effectively.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Baby boomer:* Current elderly people who were born before 1945. Early baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1954, and late baby boomers were born between 1955 and 1963 (Nam, Lloyd, & Vega, 2015).

*Labor shortage:* A result of the rapid decline in unemployment in the United States (Levanon et al., 2014).

*Skill shortage:* Identification of the skills and training needs of companies in professions regarding labor power (Beluli, 2015).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

#### **Assumptions**

Haegele and Hodge (2015) defined assumptions as a set of beliefs that guide the way in which researchers approach their investigations. The assumptions in this qualitative case study were subjective to the leaders and reports that described the decline in furniture manufacturing skills. Hiring managers' practices have evolved; now managers evaluate a candidate outside academics and consider moral and other values during the hiring process. The difficulty of filtering information and vague evaluation causes employers to hesitate in hiring the first candidate that comes along, so employers

rely on personal heuristics in making a decision (Morgan & Carley, 2014). Research also showed that employers were using situational judgment tests as a tool for assessing an applicant's job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (Slaughter, Christian, Podsakoff, Sinar, & Lievens, 2014). Evidence of skilled personnel who undermine their functional requirements diminished the assumptions that skill shortage is responsible for workers' inappropriate job performance (Shengh, 2014).

Another assumption was that the ethical value I hold while constructing this qualitative case study established a model that would influence the study. The findings from this study can provide strategies for hiring skilled furniture manufacturers. The study includes employers who have trained their employees to perform at the level their companies require.

An additional assumption was that the participants would respond with honesty and integrity. The members would voluntarily answer questions according to their personal experiences and observations. The participants would get an opportunity to review the interview data and interpretation. I assured confidentiality to provide comfort and to influence honest responses.

### **Limitations**

I encountered the following limitations: (a) risk of bias common to many or all studies, (b) inconsistency of effect or association, (c) imprecision due to few events or small sample size, and (d) indirectness of the evidence (see Yavchitz, Ravaud, Hopewell, Baron, & Boutron, 2014). Potential weaknesses or limitations to the study included personal bias, time constraints, and the type of study conducted. Personal bias provides a

window for limitation based on the participant's level of involvement in the study for gathering quality data (Sovak, 2014). In this study, having inside knowledge or experience with the businesses provided relevance to the delivery (see Sovak, 2014). I used random sampling and provided the participants with a structured format that required their insight only. The sample location presented another limitation that could have affected the strength of the study. The location of where the sample took place captured the credibility for that particular area which meant the study was not transferable to other areas of the United States. Not planning or preparing the interview questions would have put a constraint on the availability of the participants and the time to complete the study. Time constraints on the participants would have limited the interview schedule because of their job requirements. The research question limited the level of personnel to collect quality information that I could analyze.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are characteristics within a researcher's control that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study (Simon, 2011). Delimitations within the scope of this case study pertained to three furniture manufacturing companies in Huntsville, Alabama and were not representative of other areas of Alabama. I delimited operational issues such as specific job functions, start time, and indoctrination. I also delimited personal interviews and observations while the interviews took place within the three sample organizations. I depended on leaders, management, or executives in the furniture organizations to provide insight into the hiring process of skilled workers. Restrictions

for the study included only those who were employed or in touch with the organization and had the authority to hire.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Contribution to Business Practice**

Hiring leaders have experienced challenges in finding skilled workers to fill positions, though the problem was more of a skill mismatch than a skill shortage (Cappelli, 2015). Conducting this study was significant to the furniture manufacturing industry because the findings can provide information that assist hiring managers in creating strategies to hire skilled workers. Matching skilled workers to a hiring need assist hiring managers in improving business practices and increasing profit.

#### **Implications for Social Change**

The 7.6% U.S. unemployment rate did not drop following the 2008 recession as quickly as it has in past recessions (Shipps & Howard, 2013). The implications for positive social change included the potential to implement strategies to hire skilled workers. Having skilled workers in organizational positions would allow community support by providing higher quality products and services that sustain operations in the local community. Local business managers can create community programs to increase opportunity awareness of the need for furniture manufacturing skills and strengthen community relations.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The literature review contains data collected from scholarly peer-reviewed journals and the official government resources including the Bureau of Labor Statistics,

International Labor Review, and the Journal of Government Financial Management. All of the articles are current within the past 5 years. I conducted data searches on article databases such as EBSCO, Business Source Premier, and Academic Source Premier. Keywords included *hiring strategy, business training, education training, job skill mismatch, outsourcing, and a combination of searches for labor shortage, unskilled workers, and organization training*. I compared the strategies and methods of HR, education and organization requirement, and I contrasted elements of various strategies relating to skill shortage. The literature review consisted of 114 references, of which 100% were peer-reviewed and published within 5 years of expected completion of the study. The entire study has 127 references, which were all peer-reviewed and published within 5 years of expected completion of the study.

I identified gaps in past and present research literature, linking skill shortages and the strategies to overcome them in a thriving economy. My criteria included personnel and requirements that influenced an individual's academic and skill training development. Gaps in the literature justified conducting a study to analyze the strategies to overcome skill shortage. Skill shortages have existed when there were available workers, but the literature did not include a clear remedy.

The literature review includes the conceptual framework, which was used to address the skills shortage issue while offering a theoretical foundation; the contributors to the skill shortage, focused on what caused the skill shortage; and the personal bias section that addresses personal reasons for not hiring an individual. I also discuss the strategies for success, highlighting strategies HR and organization leaders can use to

locate skilled workers; present internal resources and methods that would help locate talent and improve skills to increase organization competitiveness; and provide a detailed analysis of the skill shortage theory. These topics were a response to the research question “What strategies do hiring managers use to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry?”

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this case study was the skill shortage theory, which involves matching skills with the demand of a particular job requirement (Green, 2013; Kok, 2014; Weaver, 2015). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore hiring managers’ strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. The research question that guided this study was “What strategies do hiring managers to use to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry?”

Levanon et al. (2014) reported that the U.S. economy in the next decade would face labor shortages because of a declining unemployment and mass retirement of baby boomers. There are a couple of questionable factors regarding the problem with skill shortages, the demand for jobs, and available jobs. In general, the weak demand and limited job vacancies have caused a structural mismatch between job requirements and personal skill (Beluli, 2015). The skill shortage theory applies to an exploration of strategies for hiring skilled workers to match a required skill to an organizational job requirement (Green, 2013). The skill shortage theory addresses the need to understand skills in modern society. The demand for skills has increased because of the advancement

of technology and the level of education in the workforce is currently expanding (Green, 2013). Therefore, an understanding of the transition is required to match skills and jobs effectively.

### **Contributors to Skill Shortage**

A strict labor market hinders economic growth and decreases labor resources (Fakih & Ghazalian, 2015). This causes unemployment rates to increase, which induces serious problems for the economy and labor markets, including the indication of skill shortages. Lourens and Jonker (2013) reported that between 1995 and 2000 global trade in furniture grew by 36% and by 2000 it was the largest low-technology sector. However, in the last 10 years, the world has seen competition from developing countries: China, the largest competitor, and to a lesser degree Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The European Union was a competitor in leading imported furniture, importing more than 50% of total amount of furniture exported. Louren and Jonker reported that statistics from imports of developing countries were increasing. For example, Windapo (2016) showed how the South African furniture industry experienced a significant loss of employment and their prospects were unclear in the face of strong competition from imports. The problem was a major weakness in product design and quality, including low levels of automation, a lack of skill development, and failure to develop a commitment to quality in the labor force (Windapo, 2016). The South African labor shortage did not pertain to unavailable workers but those workers not allowed a certification for the training or experience received on the job. The government considered their work inadequate

because of the weak education system, which hindered them from getting accreditation for the training and experience received (Windapo, 2016).

Skill shortages also exist in other occupations like the health industry. Reports from the field of general surgeons attributed their skill shortage to students skipping training, rising medical tuition, and malpractice (Reid-lombardo, Glass, Marcus, Liesinger, & Jones, 2014). Plawecki (2015) expressed a need for an intervention to overcome the loss of acute care nurses because of aging, baby boomer retirement, mandates, and turnover.

Aside from specific occupations, one of the general contributors to skills shortages is the preparedness of students entering employment. According to Stephenson, Mayes, Combs, and Webber (2015), job applicants lack motivation, appearance, punctuality, flexibility, and interpersonal communication skills. Employers reported that among the soft skills undergraduates need for employment, communication ranks second to skill proficiency. Stephenson et al. stated 60% of the employers disapprove of the communication skills their prospects display during interviews. The researchers found the skill shortage determination was not specifically the lack of training but a deficiency in individuals' communication and interpersonal skills.

Research in manufacturing has revealed difficulties embracing innovation, which was a factor associated with a lack of skilled labor, inadequate technology, and financial instability (Petter, Resende, & deAndrade Junior, 2013). In October 2012, the National Association of Manufacturers reported 62% of small- and medium-sized manufacturers could not fill the positions because of a shortage of qualified candidates (Moutray &



Swift, 2013). The attention toward U.S. manufacturing has increased recently because of its elevation in exports, the economic impact on labor, and production. Although opportunities can improve some of the burdens, there remain challenges to global economic growth, taxes, regulations, and a labor force unprepared for the 21st century's needs (Moutray & Swift, 2013). Factors influencing skill shortage in many industries include the image, the quality of training, the aging workforce, the seasonal demand cycle, technology, the economy, and certification (Windapo, 2016).

Globalization permits international exchange of money and technology worldwide. Even more, globalization affects the demand for skills and unemployment. Kondoh (2014) introduced a new dynamic that was in operation as globalization and immigration continued to take form. Globalization refers to integrating international dependence of commodities and services on an increasingly broad scale (Solarin & Eric, 2015). Advertising, production, and marketing are three pillars empowering the economic services that linked the partnering countries (Solarin & Eric, 2015). Asongu (2014) described globalization as being a tool to combat corruption. The neoliberal school of thought suggested that globalization is the economic and social repair kit for global inequality. Asongu reported that benefits of this new innovative investment would establish societal organization while creating economic growth. The rewards of the supply and demand would spread internationally creating new jobs and more pay.

Free trade and international trade both have influenced skill shortages. According to Peters (2015), free trade caused a decrease in labor because of an increase in imported goods and as a result, businesses failed. The effect caused local businesses to stop their

support for immigration and lay off employees. The effect continued with increased unemployment, reduced wages, and other failed businesses. Li, Pan, and Zou (2015) argued that the effect of international trade on technological expertise increases skill intensity and innovation, which increases skill price. Economists suggest the introduction of new technology creates a demand for new skills and that causes wages to fluctuate, but wages will adjust with economic development (Li et al., 2015). In their technical report, Kohpaiboon and Jongwanich (2014) suggested that international trade with proper resource allocation might provide a country a steady income and reduce the wage gap between skilled and unskilled workers.

In recent studies, researchers have revealed the disparity between education and skill training for high school graduates. Young graduates have had difficulty finding a job that matches their level of qualifications (Jean-François Giret, Guégnard, & Murdoch, 2015). Former President Obama, with the assistance of his administration, funded a strategy to abort a claim of labor shortage due to the failing STEM program (Stevenson, 2014). Johnson, Fogarty, Fullerton, Bluestone, and Drake (2013) reported decreasing resources and a shortage of critical skills required intervention. The researchers performed an integrative review of literature analyzing factors believed contributed to quality preservice education. Their findings showed that preservice education reflects the investment needed for immediate impact and foundation for graduates who are competent professionals at the time of their entry into the workforce.

Low reading comprehension of potential applicants increases some skill shortages. Channa and Nordin (2015) discovered a problem in reading comprehension

and found some of the countries affected by the deficiency suffered a shortage of skilled experts in various career fields as a result. Channa and Nordin revealed that there are skill requirements for entry into professions that enable novices to grasp the content of different subjects in disciplines. The approach to their findings was the Semiotic movement, which involved an individual moving from primary to higher mental capacities by examining the relationship in the middle of sign and significance.

Blickenstaff, Wolf, Falk, and Foltz (2015) stressed the importance of teaching and learning how the students engage foster critical thinking skills that are valuable to graduates and businesses. According to Muhammad (2014), an educational institution for nursing revealed a problem in teaching that resulted in a shortage in the nursing field. The deficiency caused low enrollment, which contributed to the shortage in nursing and increased the demand for healthcare providers. Muhammad found that many of those skilled health professionals pursued other opportunities abroad, which added to the shortage.

Issues with recruitment have caused specific shortages in the health industry. Lee and Nichols (2014) predicted a 20% shortage of physicians in rural communities within the next two decades. Sixty-five percent of the U.S. rural counties do not have adequate health professionals because physicians prefer to practice their profession in the city rather than the countryside (Lee & Nichols, 2014). As a result, there exists a challenge for recruitment in rural areas to find health care professionals and identify a strategy for sustainment.

Other issues with recruitment are students having the right skills for potential employers and recruiters finding employees with the right skills. While there seemed to be a widespread talent shortage, Ren, Sun, Zhang, Chen, and Liu (2015) reported that China was experiencing a dilemma in finding qualified graduates for jobs. The educational institutions in China teach students how to prepare and pass examinations but failed to teach them job skills. Ren et al. assumed that the lack of skill training would challenge and question the method of recruiting used to fulfill the business's needs. According to Micik and Eger (2015), the purpose of recruitment is to locate and capture quality talent for the organization. In 2006, industry recruiters spent 20% of their time searching for skilled labor. Micik and Eger reported employers have considered hiring and training their personnel rather than compete with the market. Their argument was the shortage of skills makes it tough to attract employees with critical skills in a competitive market.

Studies have shown similar issues with students having the right communication skills that recruiters are looking for in potential employees. According to Hanapi, Nordin, and Khamis (2015), six countries outside the United States ranked 51% as having existing skill labor in 2014; however, Malaysia showed having only 28% skilled labor. Hiring skilled personnel for highly experienced jobs was a problem in Malaysia because 80,000 of their graduates remained unemployed for lack of employability skills. Hanapi, Nordin, and Khamis found that employers seek self-confidence, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and proactiveness, which are the employability skills managers want their employees to have. Malaysia provides technical and vocational

education training for the semiskilled students and those who are skilled in enhancing their economy. However, Hanapi, Nordin, and Khamis found that many students graduate with technical skills but did not have the employability skills employers require to get the job. Singaravelu and Paramasivam (2016) showed that students have a problem with listening, speaking, and writing which are the three elements necessary for communicating. Singaravelu and Paramasivam argued that effective communication provides confidence to face evaluators during job interviews. The researchers concluded communication skills assist students in gaining a competitive edge.

Some researchers claim that students are not receiving the skills they need to for employment. Kaptan (2014) shared thoughts similar to Johnson et al. (2013), who recommended capacity building because it appeared students were receiving academic knowledge but not the skill knowledge needed for employability. Kaptan's concept required the youth to supplement education with skill training to build their capacity that would assist in improving the economy. Meanwhile, the government expressed, that contributing factors to the skills gap were the lack of talent management and government retirements (Datt & Rivera, 2013). Managing talent and retirement are vital to the government caring out their mission (Datt & Rivera, 2013).

Collet, Hine, and du Plessis (2015) have claimed that the employability gap remains an issue caused by the investors. The researchers reported the stakeholders' alliance to define the term employability has failed, and that has reduced their meetings to get an agreement. The teachers who talked to the business sector to gather their job requirements had difficulty implementing the changes into the school's curriculum. Thus,

students entered an evolving workforce with nonroutine jobs, which made it tough for them to match their learned skills with the required skills. Collet et al. stated that it was the employer's responsibility to communicate and train the employees to meet their requirements. Neubert, Mainert, Kretzschmar, and Greiff (2015) reported that the job task trend was gradually changing from an individual performing routine work to those more interactive. Jobs require practical problem-solving skills needed for collaboration with other employees. Ilogho and Nkiko (2014) conducted a study on information literacy and found that 62.67% of the 400 students surveyed did not comprehend clearly or follow proper instructions. The study showed that undergraduates, first-year students and scholars do not have good information literacy skills, which communicated an issue with students being prepared to enter the workforce.

According to Snyder (2014), there was a needed change in advanced cognitive skills required for future employment, which included problem-solving, system thinking, teamwork, self-directed learning, cyber-literacy, and applied creativity. Snyder predicted 21 million new jobs would need filling within the next 10 years while 33 million baby boomers are retiring. Snyder explained that developing trends have reduced the effect of our primary education system in the midst of labor challenges. Technology and globalization demands along with dwindling entry-level employment would not meet the request of replacing expected retirees.

Employees' opinions of the recruitment process can also be a contributor to the shortage of skilled personnel. For example, Muthukumaran (2014) presented employees' opinions toward the recruitment process, arguing that a business should market its vision,

culture, and values to differentiate itself from its competitors to improve the hiring process. Furthermore, employees described the struggle to find a job, while employers complain how difficult it was to find an applicant with the qualified skills (Muthukumaran, 2014). According to Bird and Williams (2014), employability awareness has progressed to a digital concept, which involved management and employees having resources in the workplace as well as schools and libraries. The Labor Department-sponsored O'Net, an information database loaded with workplace needs. Bird and Williams reported that the system allowed librarians to connect to work activities to help equip job seekers with the information employers are expecting from a new applicant.

Andronie and Andronie (2014) argued that education and training are the best methods to combat the disparities in the quality of workers. The evolution of society has allowed the advancement of computers, technology, and information, which are tools that managers and workers use to succeed. Andronie and Andronie said the problem was not the individual employee it was the institution's receptiveness to the changes in innovation. According to Andronie and Andronie, the Global Labor report showed that by 2030 an average of 90-95 million unqualified workers worldwide with 45 million of those workers lacking academic mid-level studies.

### **Personal Bias**

Park, Kim, and Jang (2014) disputed the report that labor shortages are clear-cut which addressed the ability of a company's currency to draw a conclusion on their capacity to manage labor issues. Imperfect information reported about a firm's resources

used to advertise and reach highly publicized labor pools that the small and medium-sized enterprises cannot, produced a size bias trend (Park, Kim, & Jang, 2014). The report showed small and medium-sized businesses provided 80% of manufacturing jobs in 2009 (Park, Kim, & Jang, 2014). Park et al., stressed the news of a labor shortage caused the smaller and medium-sized companies to contend with larger companies because of false reports of not having the ability to pay a competitive wage and provide a competitive job. Labor shortage reports scared the masses of applicants to seek larger companies for employment because of their high profile and wealth (Park, Kim, & Jang, 2014). Jones (2014) showed biases are a result of first impressions based on an emotional reaction enforced by interpreted data and events that support our initial impressions. Lindner, Graser, and Nosek (2014) reported discrimination was one of the many biases that affect skill shortage and has hindered qualified applicants from receiving employment. The Age Discrimination Employment Act (ADEA) deters such actions, primarily for those employed, but the policy holds little power when it comes to hiring an older adult (Lindner, Graser, & Nosek, 2014). Researchers have shown older adults with equal or more experience than the average younger applicants are 40% less likely chosen for the job (Lindner, Graser, & Nosek, 2014).

In their report on weight discrimination, Grant and Mizzi (2014) claimed weight was a factor contributing to skill shortage by lower hiring rates compared to applicants with average weight, although weight has no bearing on the job description (Grant & Mizzi, 2014). Stereotype biases have continued to emerge in the extant literature. Typical biases are personal demography between the applicant and employer and the



qualifications of the applicant for the job he or she has applied. Malos (2015) provided two examples of stereotype biases: Malos's first example was a highly rated insurance specialist with four children lost a promotion to a lower-rated candidate after her immediate supervisor found out she had kids and a lot on her plate. The second example was the director of an assisted living facility was terminated at age 53 after being told by her supervisor that she dressed like an old woman. In conclusion, the report showed the facility's CEO reprimanded the staff for not hiring younger, vibrant people he believed would last longer, provide more energy, and be willing to work more hours. Lyons, Wessel, Chiew, and Marie (2014) found a strategy used by job seekers to conceal their age called the *Identity Management Strategy*. The identity management strategy emerged because age hindered older applicants from getting the job. Lyons et al. listed three ways job seekers protected themselves: (a) denying their age or suppressing information that revealed their age, also called counterfeiting a false identity; (b) avoiding age in normal conversations, also called avoiding the issue of identity; and (c) deflecting the conversation from age to another focus, called downplaying the stereotype where the employee seeks to change the stigma.

### **Strategies for Success**

According to Bahn and Cameron (2013), the human capital theory outlined education increases workers' skills, and the skilled workers increase an organization's productivity, creating a catalyst for greater employee pay. The qualified employee is then empowered to choose jobs that provide more training. Bahn and Cameron believed society should encourage learning and facilitate change at all levels to improve

performance, effectiveness, and build capacity. Business leaders who invest in employee training are beneficial to future organizations (Mohrenweiser, 2016). Johnson, Wilding, and Robson (2014) reported the strength to outsourcings is cost savings. The other strength they highlighted was enhanced quality because of the skill and expertise of the HR personnel to find quality staff.

According to Sulphrey (2015), employability skills are generic skills other than technical and are skills that will make graduates more likely to gain employment. Sulphrey claimed the human capital theory defines employability as an individual having the ability to do the work rather than sharpening the tools for an individual to get a job. He reported an employable person brings skills that benefit the organization, the community and the economy (Sulphrey, 2015).

President Obama's administration created the American Graduation Initiative and collaborated with communities in each state to help 5 million students graduate by 2020 (Cooper, 2014). The initiative included assisting disadvantaged kids and students through research centers and community colleges to succeed (Cooper, 2014). The administration has invested \$1 billion in grants and development programs that lead to high paying quality jobs in manufacturing, transportation, health care, and STEM. The initiative included investing another \$1 billion over the next two years (Cooper, 2014).

The workforce development initiatives or strategies covered a broad range of activities, including education, formal and informal training, and access to relevant services such as labor market information, intermediation, and exchange (Chin & Liu, 2014). A useful device used in many organizations was on the job training, (OJT) needed

for professional performance (Metso, 2014). Training and development programs are essential to growth and closely linked to the strategic directions of the organization (Sawitri & Muis, 2014). Some employers have been reluctant to invest in training and development because they feared their employees might leave because of their improved skills (Kennett, 2013). Employers expected their investment in training to raise the capacity of the organization's collective skills and thereby improve its productivity (Kennett, 2013).

Francom and Gardner (2014) discovered a new form of education that tasks students with real-world situations to gain a better understanding of the lesson. The researchers believed this type of teaching helped the student grasp the relevancy and retain an understanding of the material they are learning. The teacher's trust this style of learning in school would allow the students to apply the training outside the school (Francom & Gardner, 2014). Francom and Gardner stated the teacher's goal was to provide guidance during the performance of the tasks allowing the student to get a complete understanding. The program supplied the students with scenarios that would benefit them on the job.

Dozier (2015) reported that The National Association of State Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences (NASAFACS) is an organization that helped equip and assist college graduates in planning for future employment. They provide basic skills and content knowledge, which are core competencies business owners are seeking (Dozier, 2015). In light of global competition, business owners have been reevaluating the NASAFACS standards because international graduates have value, and they demonstrate

a working knowledge of other cultures (Dozier, 2015). College graduates adapt to various cultures with sensitivity and acceptance; they recognize the personal, professional, and cultural value. The students are proficient in a foreign language and understand how their skill integrates into the international market (Dozier, 2015).

Strategic HR supports a business strategy that focus on the specific content of the match and internal and external matching. Gupta (2016) argued that strategic human resource management (SHRM)'s support of business strategy has three paths, and each provides a different perspective and a chance to review research through. According to Hafeez and Aburawi (2013), human resource management's mission was to find and match skills while overcoming employee turnover. Their research showed that human resource mismanagement could have a profound negative impact on an organization. Asmat, Ramzan, and Chaudhry (2015) reported a recruiter's role in an organization's development is exciting because they resolve employment issues and contribute to strengthening the business philosophy. Asmat et al. reported another mission of the organizations hiring team was to create an efficient and compliant method to recruit talented employees. HR strategy was to deliver a highly competitive professional.

Koivunen, Ylöstalo, and Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta (2015) argued recruitment inequality persist despite legislation to defeat the adverse practices at work in the labor markets. Recruitment is the threshold that separates the economic and social status of citizenship. The recruiter lists the job requirements in advertisements and within the workplace. The individual sells their qualifications and skills to obtain a job that fits the requirements of an organization that provides the personal income. Koivunen et al. found

in the midst of the recruitment process, there remained a hidden barrier of inequality and discrimination. These personal biases have prevented organizations from gaining the most suitable person for the job.

Recruitment has experienced an ongoing change in competition, recruitment sources, and new technologies. These changes have place HR professionals in the midst of poachers and invaders, who challenge them to maintain viable candidates in a productive economy (Muthukumaran, 2014). Reji (2014) claimed despite the challenges with the institution employability training across the country, the current training capacity of formal vocational training was 3.1 million people compared to 15 million new entrants into the workforce each year.

Sansom and Shore (2013) disagreed with seeing the recruitment operation as a one-way process that did not take advantage of the opportunity to fill the specialized needs of the manufacturer. Sanson and Shore described the student, employer, and the academic institution as remote and isolated from each other in the context of the recruitment process. The researchers reported a graduate, transitioning from an educational institution to employment has become more complicated. The relationship between education and the workforce is primarily an investigation process. The market trends and competition have increased the dependence on higher education, which cause graduates to delay entering into the workforce and many graduates move on to advanced education

According to research by Dezelan, Fink Hafner, and Melink (2014), the Vocational Training Act includes an apprenticeship-training program that describes and

provides the necessary equipment and training required by firms to fulfill the job standard. Dzelan et al. described how the training equipped the trainee with the core level of required skills needed along with the length of training for each occupation. At the end of the training period, each student would receive a certification (Mohrenweiser, 2016).

Unfortunately, Lovsin (2104) assessment of Vocational and Technical Education showed the neglect of kids that are in a lower economic group. The study indicated that children who were in a weaker financial situation did not receive the instruction through career planning to gain managerial skills needed for advancement. Lovsin found a contributing factor to the lack of appeal was the poor counseling practices he believed the counselors used to manipulate the child's decision. The assumption was counselors advised the students based on the outcome of their test scores rather than leading and preparing them for the next level. Lovsin concluded the conceptual mindset assumed that children who were in a low-economic group should accept the traditional education process through school and not strive for higher levels of vocational and technical training.

Nevertheless, workplace learning was another technique used to provide students with necessary professional skills required by the industry, thus helping them to grow toward true professionalism when entering job markets (Metso, 2014). Leadership, competence and a committed workforce are components of an effective strategy employers use to empower their company to succeed while gaining a competitive advantage (Mansour, 2015). In addition, Abaci & Pershing (2017) research suggested training and non-training interventions would improve an organization's performance

using Human Performance Technology (HPT). The practice involves understanding how people function from a mental perspective while on the job within a natural environmental or societal setting. Abaci & Pershing reported the HPT theory follow a philosophy by the practitioners who govern the knowledge and research data. The training tracks a systematically directed process that involves real life involvement. Abaci & Pershing proposed to form a larger group of stakeholders to develop an environment of communication to create more research on HPT.

Employee training, as suggested previously by Metso, is a tool used to combat skill deficits in business because of problems within the organization. The training incorporates goals identifiable and achievable (Atan, Raghavan, & Mahmood, 2015). The content of the programs requirements was tested, evaluated, and enforced to achieve the training programs goals (Atan, Raghavan, & Mahmood, 2015).

The economic and industrial structure of the country relies on people who have received the proper training and education. The probability of an individual with little education obtaining a job is 60%, which was the highest probability for people with any education (Fleissig, 2014). Only 1% of people with no education are attending a training program (Fleissig, 2014). The job market was broader and easier for those who did not graduate high school because of no training and reports have shown an 83% probability for college graduates. Training programs are effective in assisting individuals in obtaining and retaining a job (Fleissig, 2014). However, employability has been a concern in the higher education system around the world and discussed extensively (Vrat & Sangwan, 2016).

## **Talent Management**

The first issue that an organization needs to address in trying to fill job openings is how to reach individuals who are qualified and interested in the employment opportunities. According to Vispute (2013), recruitment generates a pool of applicants who have the desire to work for an organization. The researcher stated recruitment represents one of the jobs the HR representative in the organization used to assess an individual's suitability to join that team. Nonetheless, talent management is about analyzing the need of skilled employees and developing strategies to meet that need (Anwar, Nisar, Khan, & Sana, 2014). According to Oladapo (2014), managing shortages of talent is one of the many jobs of an organization's talent manager. The human resource manager must develop a strategy to attract, hire, develop, and retain qualified applicants. Culture changes, an aging workforce, and economic pressures require the HR manager to bond with their senior management to accomplish the job (Oladapo, 2014).

A report by Donald (2014) described talent management as a competitive profession that required a multitude amount of internal and external coordination. He claimed managers devise their task from five components that nurture success within the organization and strengthen their competitiveness. Rival businesses, in the meantime, take advantage of demographic changes and trends to meet their staffing needs. Donald concluded the hiring process takes collaboration with the internal management board to ensure they are maintaining their values. While Karas (2017) argued, there were developmental changes in economics, organizations, and technology. He found people also change in various ways, and these changes challenge organizations to implement



new technological and management changes. Management must embrace these changes to bring their teams to a place of competitiveness. Karas determined that the twenty-first century was a key factor for talent managers because they will make a significant impact on an organization's existence.

Nevertheless, Jin (2014) showed the multiple changes in personnel management has evolved into what we call talent management today. Other terms used to describe the source of gathering and managing talent was human resource management and business administration. Research has shown the impact of the internet changed the dynamics in identifying talent and hiring for organizations. The internet provides expansion through social media and sharing which grants access to more talent while allowing the talent to gather knowledge and capitalize on their choice (Jin, 2014).

Obadic and Dragicevic (2014) found a tool called flexicurity that assisted in the competitiveness of firms to help with quality and productivity on the job. The researchers explained how flexicurity encouraged employers and employees to make appropriate adjustments to economic change. The concept promotes a balance between security and flexibility in the labor market. Obadic and Dragicevic claimed globalization, rapid development in technology, demographic aging, and labor division are influencers for this resource. The skilled and unskilled are two kinds of workers divided in the labor market who require quality management (Biswas, 2015). The skilled worker has unlimited mobility while the unskilled worker is limited to their local area. The skilled worker can match labor rates across the country while the unskilled worker is limited to routine type work. The researcher stated the process of recruitment has emerged as one of

the most critical and strategic operations in any organization. Talent management inside the organization identifies and dispatches the talent throughout the business (Biswas, 2015). The practice of the talent manager is to recruit, hire, and train the talent. Bihar and Dalal (2014), argued that the demographics of talent management was changing to where organizations entertain talent on levels. The B-level workers are the task-oriented consistent performers in the organization. The researchers claimed organizations settle for a B level rather than an A level excellent performer who innovates and initiate drive. Bihar and Dalal concluded B-level workers are the majority of the hired employee's.

Human resource management is a strategic approach that changes according to events within the organization to support their environment (Mukkelli, 2015). Human resource management represents a new philosophy and training that results in change. The changes are relevant, and they are attached to people and their potential (Mukkelli, 2015). People have the potential and expectations when applying for a position in an organization. Long and Perumal (2014) claimed that a person's motivation level links to their desire for a pursued award, along with the chance of attaining the reward. The researchers argued the theory deters doubt in an organization's objective to achieve high productivity and further establish a competitive edge in the business. The human resource manager's core objective is to create an opportunity for an applicant to improve their performance (Sheng, 2014). Performance improvement is what new talent wants to achieve through their organization's training. The researcher described training is an activity, an organized approach to influence an individual's knowledge, skill, and attitude that enhances the organization's value. A well-trained employee provides the business

access to resources, material, and transitions them into an innovative, competitive environment (Sheng, 2014). Effective training helps to improve the employee and organizational deficiencies. However, weak, inappropriate, or inadequate training would be a source of frustration for everyone involved (Sheng, 2014).

A report by Ellinger and Ellinger (2014) proposed organizations could create and maintain a competitive advantage by leveraging human resource development professionals. Ellinger and Ellinger's theoretical basis for the study was human resource development, a practice that seeks to enhance learning and facilitate change at all levels to improve performance, effectiveness, and build capacity. Benitez-amado, Llorens-montes, and Fernandez-perez (2015) reported HR managers have discovered the use of Information Technology (IT) to assist with developing talent in a new environment. The IT infrastructure increases working conditions because the employees receive devices that support their work from a distance. Employees have the ability to work from home or on travel while maintaining access to corporate databases using their laptop or mobile phone. Benitez-made et al. argued IT resources assisted in the continued development of the employee by providing management with applications to evaluate the worker's efforts. The HR manager maintains environmental stability by educating and developing the employee. Benitez-made et al. concluded the organization establishes a sustainable environment by introducing goals, providing career planning, and performance evaluations.

The government has identified a skills gap that was growing and is critical to the security of our country (Datt & Rivera, 2013). The seriousness of the problem has caused

the Government Accountability Office to list Talent Management as a High Risk in the United States, and globally (Datt & Rivera, 2013). To avoid the tedium, frustration, and delays of the recruitment process, Parwez (2013) suggested, authorities should organize a hiring committee, made up of elected members from the associated department and appointed cognate members of the unit, with both genders represented. Every organization is depending on the knowledge acquisition and retention for proper implementation of resources. Parwez concluded if an organization has a good and responsible knowledge acquisition, then the output of the company would be excellent.

Conversely, Oladapo (2014) reported retention is a concern of many organizations. An employee's benefits and lifestyle are a major factor in their stability in an organization. Studies have shown there are various reasons why an employee departs an organization, many of which are personal. Things that influence employee's stability are economic validity in supply and demand and a competitive job market. Similarly, Bihani and Dalal (2014) found the age of knowledge versus industrial talent favors the employee and challenges the employer to reevaluate their strategy to overcome skill shortages. Organizations have not defined or understood their key talent. Companies make a mistake of thinking money is the key factor in employee retention. This type of mentality will damage the organization. Bihani and Dalal suggested an employee who was happy with the team and like their job would work hard, and his commitment towards his work would be high. According to Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, and Pemberton-Jones (2015) organizations can achieve employee retention by developing four strategies. First, effective communication should be encouraged. Healthy communication verbal and

non-verbal are important and should guide discussion between manager and employee. Second, hire a diverse workforce. Diversity crosses all ethnicities, and genders personal biases and misunderstanding lead to turnover. Third, hire appropriately skilled people. The right person with the right job skill external but internal personality, how does the employee identify himself or herself in an organization? Finally, offer employees development and training programs. Training and development are tools employees seek during their time on the job.

Organizations today contend with societal developments such as globalization, technological improvements, demographic changes, and increasing global competition (Mathew, 2015). These evolutions cause a shortage of workers along with the risk of losing knowledge and experience (Mathew, 2015). Employers' have questions to consider when hiring a youth, first, their preparedness for the interview, their professionalism, and their ability to perform on the job (Simonsen, Fabian, & Luecking, 2015).

### **Theoretical discussion**

Li, Pan, and Zou (2015) claimed skill labor has gradually grown in the United States and has continued to increase since World War II. The supply of skills has increased dramatically, and the favored among those are technological skills. During 1940 and 1970, skilled labor rose by 2.63% annually and increased to 3.06% annually between 1970 and 1995. Productivity in the United States has continued to remain steady in skilled labor.

According to Farooq and Kugler (2015), unemployment peaked at 10% in October 2010, and since then employment has continued to decline. The unemployed

remains to struggle to get back in the job market because of long-term unemployment. The duration of unemployment highlights a quality risk for employers to hire and that challenges the individual to remain knowledgeable of their skill. Farooq and Kugler claimed extended unemployment places people in a position of vulnerability to experience health, social, and economic problems. Some consequences of a prolonged unemployment cause families to breakdown and divorce (Wozniak, 2016). Some instances of unemployment incite community riots because of social segregation (Wozniak, 2016). A report by Rudman et al. (2016) showed how technology and the change in economics have caused employers to hesitate in hiring while influencing their competency requirements for employees.

Green (2013) claimed linking the demand and supply of skills through labor markets was more productive than typical approaches through institutional networks. The extent to which the skill and the job task match is heterogeneous because workers are seeking employment while employers are searching for employees for various jobs. The integration of a skilled worker that meets the required job tasks defines a quality job match (Kok, 2014). High schools provide the basic skills for employment, which prove to have a greater success rate than graduates with formal credentials (Dezelan, Fink Hafner, & Melink, 2014). Higher education institutions and employers are reporting skills mismatch dilemma because college students are capitalizing off technology pervasiveness (David & Mariam, 2016). Students having the flexibility of time and school access on campus or through extended learning to obtain the degree, positions them to exceed the required entry-level knowledge for the job (David & Mariam, 2016).

Skill mismatch reaches beyond those who have obtained their diploma it affects those who are called overeducated. The overeducated students are those who extend their education beyond high school and excel above the entry-level requirements (Jean-François Giret, & Murdoch, 2015). The disparity between their studies and the job requirements do not match which categorize them as a mismatch (Jean-François Giret, & Murdoch, 2015). Skill represents more than an occupation and individual prosperity; skill represents an opportunity for a person, society, or country to disclose their innovation and competitiveness (Bejakovic & Mrnjavac, 2014). Researchers have interpreted skill mismatch as an education-based factor that is relevant to undereducated, overeducated, and the level of training. Skill mismatch directly relates to pairing the right competence and level with the right job and requirements (Badillo-Amador & Vila, 2013).

According to Nieto, Matano, and Ramos (2015), horizontal mismatch was an issue neglected when discussing skill mismatch because it compared the field of education to that which is required by the job. A horizontal mismatch causes the employee to experience an adverse effect in wage because the extent of education does not match the job requirements. Employers expect vocational training to produce a candidate with high-level productivity (Coenen, Heijke, & Meng, 2015). The result of productivity causes a mismatch because the employee lacks the skills to function in the job they obtained. Unfortunately, no one can predict the future changes in the occupation which the student received the training (Coenen, Heijke, & Meng, 2015).

Robert (2014) argued that many college students receiving education in various studies that increase supply, but the demand remains constant. He calls this a vertical

mismatch where 80% of new graduates seeking employment would get jobs that do not require a degree. Robert claimed employers are concerned about the program of study from the universities because their accredited education decreases the value of a diploma because the subject-oriented competencies do not match the job requirement.

Lautenschläger (2015) stated that it was also important for graduates to consider the quality of a job, meaning the kind of professional position discussed whether a permanent, temporary staff or other subcontracted employment before they engage.

Nonetheless, the objective of the labor market is to create an economically structured process as a tool for finding qualified workers (Brozova, 2016). In 2006, the government agencies created the Intergovernmental *Partnership for Management and Accountability* a program to help their recruiting effort. The software tool purpose was to assist the applicant in identifying and assessing the required skills and knowledge before the interview (Godesky & Oliver, 2013).

A report by Krynska and Kopycinska (2015) suggested The Wage in Labor Market theory played an intricate part of the labor matching process, which operated by a term called diminishing return, where the demand for workers increase based on the real wage. The increased wage stimulates the supply while restricting the labor market. When the worker wage decrease the demand for jobs increase, and that cause a decline in available workers. Krynska and Kopycinska concluded these actions might create recruitment viability because the unemployed will accept a lower wage because of an abundant supply of employees with no change in demand. The unemployment rate is an



imperfect indicator of labor market conditions because of movements in and out of the workforce (Heller & Stephenson, 2015).

A study conducted by Grant, Maxwell, and Ogden (2014) debated the skills utilization theory. The researchers shed light on the misconception that there was a skills gap or skill shortage. Their position on this problem experienced in the United States and [other countries] was skilled un-use. The report addressed the misunderstanding and poor development of competencies which prompted the government to create a preoccupation requirement. Employers are required to answer questions on how the skills were put together and acquired. Grant, Maxwell, and Ogden addressed concerns from managers and employees because of the issue with insufficient skills needed to perform the work.

Clemens (2015) proposed the global skill partnership as a means to battle the skill shortages within the country of origin and the country of destination. The theory was a result of a foreseen problem of a country not having the required skills that are in demand. The study proposed the country of origin and the country that need skills to fill shortages create a policy that would benefit both countries. Clemens claimed the plan would provide funds for the participant with the required skills to travel and receive any additional training while filling a gap in the destination country.

The 21st century brought change and some countries including the United States still experience skill shortage (Chu, Ye, & Guo, 2015). To compensate for the lack of skills, a group of international countries joined and created a policy to hire immigrants to manage the problem. Information Technology and accountants were the chosen skills by a few of the countries who were experiencing growth. The justification for the intensity

of immigration and globalization increase was due to the spread of skill shortages in many countries (Chu, Ye, & Guo, 2015). China's rapidly growing economy has a demand for scientific and technical innovative skills, which are critical to their economic development.

Gianelle and Tattara (2014) introduced a *Vacancy Chain Model*, which is a sequential job flow of a person hired for an internal job vacancy and that starts an organization internal chain reaction. The chain flows with internal hires because employees move from job-to-job. The chain ends when an unemployed person fills the vacancy. According to Gianelle and Tattara, employers reduce unemployment in a recession by hiring the skilled worker from the unemployed group or labor market. During business expansion, unemployment will increase if the employers fill vacancies with their employed personnel.

Khalifa (2014) research defined the *Heckscher-Ohlin model*, which proposed there are two types of organizations, those that produce sophisticated goods and those who provide real products. That statement parallels the mindset that countries export the overstock of essential goods needed and import essentials the country is limited. Khalifa said the concept works similar to skilled workers, who affect the cost of the key exported products, the skilled labor demand increase, and higher pay. The unskilled country exports products that do not require skilled labor. The unskilled also have an increase in product, a demand increase for unskilled labor, and a decrease in pay.

However, Horgos and Tajoli's (2015) report compared two theories with low-skill and high-skilled workers who work offshore versus domestically. One theory called the

*Factor Bias* suggests offshoring reduce the demand for qualified low-skilled employees and increase relative wages for high-skilled workers. The relocation is the element that makes a distinction in the wage for the low-skilled and high-skilled worker depending on their location onshore or offshore. The other theory Horgos and Tajoli reported was the *Sector-Biased theory*. According to their study, one industry makes the difference between low and high skilled intensive businesses. The report showed an increase in offshore work and wage depends on the manufacturer's location and skill intensity. Horgos and Tajoli assumed low-skilled workers that divide their work offshore gain an increase in wage, whereas high-skilled salary increases at the high-skilled intense business offshore.

Taie's (2014) *Skill Acquisition theory* reported a person's capacity to learn is a psychological integration of explicit instruction and practiced understanding. Taie claimed learning starts when a person receives instruction audibly and with physical expression. While time elapses during instruction, the brain transitions to a state of knowledge. Taie determined the final phase of this development becomes a known experience where a person can practice what they learned consistently.

Nevertheless, higher education has posed a problem for graduate employment because of governance in their competencies and early career. Graduates receive current processes, policies, and logical structure but bypass the basic core education employers require (Pavlin, 2014). An argument by Jahic, Pilav-Velic, and Hrnjic (2016) addressed the educational system leader's inability to reposition employee leads to a skill mismatch. The researchers understood the importance of education and the powers education

provides individuals to compete in national and international job markets. Their study focused on the inadequate education system and the curriculum that was out of date with current needs of the business markets. Jahic et al. reported a need for a strategy to display the results of skilled workers abilities so they can put them in various careers needed throughout the country. According to Jahic et al., the old curriculum the school uses causes human capital to suffer. Money for projects and research from the state comes in small portions, and the unemployment rate for various skill levels continue to rise. The researchers suggested the state produce a program that trains the long-term unemployed because of their old knowledge. According to Jahic et al., the unemployed will need current training to stay competitive in the job market because of the constant changes in technology.

Skills mismatch is not a topic easily defined because of the various theoretical terminologies according to individuals' frame of mind (Chlon-Dominczak, Magda, & Sienkiewicz, 2016). Employees and employers are important components used in the creation of the term mismatch. Furthermore, the term over qualified address older adults who have worked in numerous positions for years and because of their age and time invested on the job have influenced the definition skill mismatch (Chlon-Dominczak et al., 2016). Many people view the gained experience older workers have acquired as being outdated because they received most of their knowledge early in life. Employers in some cases resist hiring older workers because of the depth of their old knowledge. The constant change in technology supports their decision not to hire older workers but look

for younger talent who are in the development of new technology (Chlon-Dominczak et al., 2016).

Alternatively, Sahin, Song, Topa, and Violante (2014) compared skills mismatch to the great recession based on the number of people unemployed and the number of job vacancies during 2009 - 2012. Sahin et al. showed the increase and decreased in various career sectors like healthcare compared to the losses in construction. The unemployed in construction could not transfer over to other jobs because of the skill difference, although there were vacancies. Sahin et al. created a quantitative concept to produce their mismatch theory. The model compared the unemployment by career types in various locations and then identified the vacancies for those careers. In conclusion, the researchers found the unemployed did not seek employment in other areas although there was work available, which resulted in a skills mismatch.

As stated earlier by Chlon-Dominczak, Magda, and Sienkiewicz (2016), skills mismatch is a result of someone's perception, which offers various avenues to defined meaning. Uganda used the term skills mismatch because employers stated the graduates did not possess the required skills and knowledge expected from traditional teaching (Bagarukayo, Ssentamu, Mayisela, & Brown, 2016). A report by the Uganda National Council for Higher Education showed the lowest degree program compared to Tanzania, Nigeria, and Kenya (Bagarukayo et al., 2016). Computing, entrepreneurship, problem solving, communication and general organization were the skills reported (Bagarukayo et al., 2016). The researchers believed the *Activity theory* would equip the students with the knowledge and skills needed for work. According to Bagarukayo et al., the *Activity*

*theory* equips students with social learning, transfer, and education applications in new situations among business systems. Facebook was the activity tool used in the study for building the knowledge transfer in students to develop their skills for job requirements. There are other tools the students will use to help them with choosing a job like a website being the most accessible, a job description, and their personal qualifications (Humphrey, 2014). In addition, the organization must use tools to filter through the hundreds of personnel reviewing thousands of skills to make a decision that will have a lasting effect on both the organization and the student (Humphrey, 2014). The researcher suggested the success of both the individual and the organization would require an exchange. The *Social Exchange theory* operates on the principal that someone gives something of value and in return receives something perceived to have equal or greater value (Humphrey, 2014). The focus of the theory was to identify the social actions of individuals and the type of role they displayed as leaders, followers, or power seekers while interacting with other students (Humphrey, 2014).

On the contrary, the European Union is one of a few countries whose politics influence skills mismatch (Grunau, 2016). The EU established a 40% goal for higher education by the year 2020 throughout the country. Current research shows a slight gap of 4% to 6.5% of their goal, which causes a mismatch by failing to reach the 40% goal. Not having enough educated workers in a particular career field will cause the employers to hire uneducated workers, which creates a horizontal mismatch (Grunau, 2016). The report showed by failing to attain the 40% higher education goal will cause an effect on the supply and demand. The problem of not having the request of educated workers to fill

the required jobs produces a mismatch with over education (Grunau, 2016). The researcher suggested the employers are contributors to the mismatch theory because they set the requirements and standards for the job. Grunau suggested the strategy of the manager should address the type of skill level required based on their previous assessment. According to Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, and Martinez (2015) applicants viewed skill mismatch as an impediment. The broad spectrums of skills mismatch address the over-educated, the undereducated, or the qualified worker. Kulkarni et al. reported policy and political discussions, as well as organization economics, have persuaded the reframing of businesses. The researchers found employers depend on part-time and contingent workers more now than in the past. Kulkarni et al. concluded these changes in the market mean employees will accept jobs that do not use all their skill knowledge. Also, the competition in the labor market will cause educated workers to seek more education, which creates a mismatch imbalance.

Continuing the discussion on skills mismatch Kacerová (2016) addressed the perspective that a skills mismatch was a result of the education obtained. Kacerová suggested there are three reasons for a mismatch in jobs: (a) Children who graduate have to compete with those who are already working in the job market, (b) graduates who find themselves in jobs that do not match their qualifications, and (c) an imbalance in the use of the gained abilities and the job qualifications. Kacerová believed imbalance was a result of the employers listing of the job or the abilities of the employee were not clear. Other contributors to the mismatch revealed ineffective communication between the employer and the applicant. Kacerová reported, student's ambition in the midst of labor

market uncertainty, create difficulty for the graduates. Kacerová concluded that one-sixth of young graduates from European countries are unemployed. In the midst of their economic instability, the graduates showed a lack of competence and transferable employability skills.

### **Transition**

Section 1 focused on the problem with hiring managers lacking strategies to locate skilled workers in the furniture industry. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore hiring managers' strategies to locate and hire skilled workers. A qualitative methodology enabled the researchers to represent participants' views of the complex world within the realm of their lives (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). The conceptual framework for this case study was the skill shortage theory (Green, 2013). The significance in conducting this proposed study was critical to the industry because the findings provide information that will assist hiring managers in creating strategies to hire skilled workers. Matching skilled workers to a hiring need will assist hiring managers in improving business practices and increasing profit. The literature review contains an assortment of data collected from scholarly peer-reviewed journals and official government resources to include: (a) a conceptual framework, which addressed the skills shortage issue while offering a theoretical foundation; (b) the contributors to the skill shortage section, focused on what caused the skill shortage; (c) the personal Bias section addressed personal reasons for not hiring an individual; (d) the strategies for success section highlighted strategies human resource and organization leaders can use to locate skilled workers; (e) the talent management section that presented internal resources



and methods that can help locate talent and improve skills to increase organization competitiveness; and (6) the theoretical detailed analysis of the skill shortage theory.

In Section 2, there is a description of a qualitative method research approach. The focus is on strategies used to help managers find qualified workers. Research methods, research design, interview questions, ethical research, data collection, organization, and analysis completes Section 2. Section 3 included findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for future study, and reflection.

## Section 2: The Project

### **Introduction**

I described the purpose of this research study, my role as the researcher, the participants, and population and sampling, and the methods and processes used to collect and analyze data. I also addressed dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies hiring managers use to locate skilled workers. To explore this phenomenon, I interviewed managers related to recruitment strategies. I collected data through interviews to reach data saturation. I analyzed data collected from the interviews, research data, and organized the data using codes. Methodological triangulation from these two data collection techniques increased the reliability and validity of the study.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore hiring managers' strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. The target population included three furniture manufacturers located in Huntsville, Alabama who have successfully developed and implemented strategies for hiring skilled workers. The findings from my study may impact social change with strategies for hiring skilled workers to support continuous employment within the local community. An organizations' recruitment processes can influence social change while assisting with the reduction of unemployment and strengthening the local economy.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher has a responsibility to remain detached to conduct a valuable analysis of the problem (Takyi, 2015). I chose face-to-face semistructured interviews with open-ended questions as the data collection method. The interview provided me the opportunity to capture current information from the source. The interview consisted of three concepts that guided the process: (a) the beginning, (b) during, and (c) the end, which completed data analysis (see Muganga, 2015). The interview process included the whole-part relationship, interpretation, and language. I needed to stay alert of personal biases influencing my thoughts while collecting and processing the interview data analysis (see Muganga, 2015). I identified qualified participants for the interview and tried to remain detached so that I would not influence the data collection process. I had to adhere to the principals of the Belmont Report, established in 1979, which obligates the researcher to have respect for participants, imposed beneficence, and treat them and their submissions with justice (Judkins-Cohn, Kielwasser-Withrow, Owen, & Ward, 2014). I chose to interview furniture manufacturers because they are connected with the corporate sector and provide valuable products to local customers. I have worked with various manufacturers as a logistician, which supplied me a wealth of knowledge in their processes and operation. I was aware that leadership constantly experiences changes in the manufacturing business including cycling skill sets needed for future sustainment.

My preferred method of data collection was a face-to-face interview, and my alternate was Skype. I did not collect any data until I received approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). To ensure anonymity, I used the approved

question guide for each participant, which excluded any request for personal data. I obtained a consent form from each participant before the interview. The interviews lasted 15-20 minutes with 10 structured, open-ended questions. I monitored the interview time using my phone so the interview did not go longer than promised. I used my phone to capture responses to questions in the interview process and later used the recordings to support handwritten notes in a journal. I understand the collected data obtained through consent and trust must remain confidential and researchable on request (Lodhi, 2016). I will maintain the collected data on a password protected data storage device for 5 years after completion of the study. I will destroy the data by shredding or electronic erasure after the 5 years.

I identified with business managers because of a previous occupation that challenged me to find qualified applicants for employment. When I recruited individuals to join the United States Army, I had to develop a strategy to find qualified personnel to fill the jobs that strengthen the Army. During the qualifying process, there were opportunities for personal bias to influence my decisions and possibly destroy the trust of the individual. I could not jeopardize my or the Army's image with unethical violations. At the end of the interview process, I reviewed the data with the applicant, asked follow-up questions for clarity, and provided all applicants a copy of their application. The data was stored on an official secure system for confidentiality and future use.

### **Participants**

The preferred participants for the study were owners or managers of a furniture business in Northern Alabama. Through a convenience sample, I planned to visit the

company to obtain permission to interview and collect relevant research data at the site (see Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013). I planned to gain access to the participants through Skype or face-to-face for interviews describing the research and answering any potential questions participants may have about the study. Upon IRB approval (10-18-17-0231079), I delivered a letter of consent to the participants outlining the purpose of the study, the criterion for 18 years of age or older, and a request for voluntary participation.

I will maintain the collected data on a password protected data storage device for 5 years after completion of the study. I will destroy the data by shredding or electronic erasure after the 5 years (see Akhavan et al., 2013; see Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014). Ethics was vital to the participants, the study, and the protocols of the Belmont Report for maintaining ethical standards throughout the study (Judkins-Cohn et al., 2014).

The choice of a furniture manufacturing business for research derived from a random process of finding an adequate sample size for my study. Furthermore, the furniture business met the criteria of five businesses with 5 or more years of operation and profitability increase. One of the study's protocols required me to establish a working relationship between myself and the participants (see Yin, 2014). I relate to this business as an experienced professional who has worked a job that required me to find talent to qualify and fill special skills jobs shortages. Therefore, my method of data collection may create an insider-outsider relationship for this endeavor.

### **Research Method and Design**

In this section, I will discuss the use of the qualitative research method and the case study design along with the relationship between the research question, the applied

business problem, and purpose of the study. The qualitative research method accommodated multiple and different research traditions (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014).

### **Research Method**

Using the qualitative method enables researchers to represent participants' views of a complex world within the realm of their lives (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). The qualitative method was my preferred method for data collection to answer the question of what strategies hiring managers lack in locating and hiring skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. Quantitative research is the methodology used in science and the principal method used for investigative studies in social sciences and management (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). Employing a quantitative method of study would have required testing hypotheses to analyze data to understand relationships and differences among variables (McKenzie, 2015) and therefore would not have fit the purpose of this study. The mixed method approach is an integration of two methodologies that allows the researcher to capitalize on both qualitative and quantitative research (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). The mixed method approach was not appropriate for this study because the method includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection, and only the qualitative method was necessary to address the purpose of this study.

### **Research Design**

Using the case study design for this study allowed in-depth exploration of hiring managers' strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing

industry. Case study research has a level of flexibility not readily offered by other qualitative approaches (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). Phenomenological researchers analyze individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon (Lach, 2014) and therefore a phenomenological design was not the preferred design for the proposed study. Brooks and Alam (2015) described that ethnographic research is participant observation oriented, interventional, and is used to seek insights into daily practices through applying an insider-outsider view. Using an ethnographic design would have required a written observation of culture in a natural setting; therefore, it was not the preferred design for the proposed study. According to De Loo, Cooper, and Manochin (2015), a narrative design is a sequence of events which typically have an observable beginning and end not reflections but interpretations by the narrator or researcher with the intent to enhance a person's understanding of their actions. Narrative research reveals multifaceted demonstrated and emplaced social phenomena within a particular arena (Hunter & Emerald, 2016) and was therefore not the preferred design for the study. The case study was one of the preferred designs for exploring strategies (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013) and was used to meet the purpose of this study.

### **Population and Sampling**

I chose a purposeful sample for this qualitative case study. The target population included a sample of three of the five furniture manufacturers located in Huntsville, Alabama who have developed and implemented strategies for hiring skilled workers. The sample included three random selected businesses of the five. A sample calculation was

an important factor and pivotal in planning a research study (Gupta, Attri, Singh, Kaur, & Kaur, 2016).

The case study methodology provided an approach for describing and exploring complex issues with flexibility, yet it was rigorous in gaining an in-depth understanding of the field of interest (Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, & Casey, 2015). In a qualitative case study, data saturation was one of the criteria that indicates that the researcher has achieved a sufficient amount of data collection (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015). A researcher might achieve data saturation through interviews as well as collecting bundles of data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). However, many businesses select the wisest person in their profession for interviews, a technique called shaming, which would overshadow the data collected (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To fix this, some researchers identify and capture the richness of the problem manager's experience (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). Data saturation also assisted me in ensuring I had interviewed a sufficient number of participants for the purpose of the study.

I delivered and collected a letter of consent from all participants. My letter of information included the focus of the study and described the degree of participant involvement including the method for data collection. I also reminded the participants that participation was voluntary and confidential. The consent form ensured participants there was no significant risk associated with participating in the study. I followed the interview protocol to ensure I maintained ethics during the interview process (Appendix A).



### **Ethical Research**

Ethics has a universal understanding of caring and respect for people as a human being (Christensen, 2015). A researcher must stay alert to the temptation of deception to gain better insight into the topic of research, which violates ethics. Despite the gain of insight and knowledge of research, the ethical obligation of the researcher must outweigh the scientific search for the truth (Christensen, 2015). I began the research after I received IRB approval. I personally introduced myself to the participants and provided a consent form allowing time to ask questions for understanding and I informed them of the purpose of the study. Participants had an opportunity to meet with me further in person or on the phone to discuss their participation and any details of the study. I provided the participants with a consent form for their signature of approval before moving forward and each participant received a hard copy of their consent form. After receiving IRB approval, I created a white paper version of my study to condense research findings and provided the participants with a copy. I used a password-protected computer and stored the data on a USB drive for confidentiality and I will destroy all interviews and documents 5 years after completion of the study. I maintained ethical standards at all times to preserve the intentions and purpose of the study.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I served as the primary data collection instrument in this study using interviews and company recruitment documentation to triangulate data collection. The researcher is the active data collection agent making numerous decisions throughout the process, inherently affecting the trajectory of the study (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy,

2013; Yin, 2014). The interview was ideal for me to use the prescribed list of questions with participants in a conversational format within a fixed timeframe. The interview format allows the researcher to probe participant perceptions and observations concerning components of an issue or event previously experienced (Yin, 2014). My intent was to approach the research without personal bias influencing the study regarding hiring managers lacking strategies to locate skilled workers in the furniture industry. I explored the issue in an interview with experienced executives. The preconceived interview questions were created from the current literature to start a dialogue with the participant within a defined period. The planned interview format was ideal for a structured timeframe (Yin, 2014).

Houghton et al. (2013) argued that researchers establish rigor in qualitative case studies by adhering to the elements of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. He expounded, researchers must adhere to these qualitative standards of reliability and validity with any instrumentation used. Most important to the choice of instrumentation, specifically to my selection of the interview format, was the issue of credibility (Houghton et al., 2013). For instrumentation, I had to adhere to these standards with the use of disclosure. Houghton et al. (2013) argued that audit trails and full descriptions in case study research are central to researchers establishing reliability and validity as they allow readers to assess the alignment and usefulness of instrumentation for capturing a full view of case components. I satisfied this requirement with full disclosure within the interview. My format involved the disclosure of all participant perceptions and observations within interview transcripts, as well as access to any of my

responses to participant interactions through reflexive journaling within the notes of transcribed interactions (Houghton et al., 2013). The interview protocol guide provided greater structure to the interview and satisfied the disclosure requirement in case study research (Draper & Swift, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Central to effective interviews is the researcher's ability to guide participant dialogue along with a predetermined line of inquiry (Yin, 2014). I followed an interview protocol guide while conducting the interviews for this study (see Appendix A). The protocol guide provided the process for participants to adhere to during interactions (Draper & Swift, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview process consisted of addressing preliminary demographic considerations, I probed participants perceptions and observations of strategies used to locate skilled manufacturing workers, and I asked follow-up questions reflective of issues that I revealed during dialogue. I used my phone recorder during the interview to assist and later in developing a transcript. Finally, I thanked the participant for taking the time to participate in the study.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The process for data collection in this case study included face to face open-ended semistructured interviewing and collecting company recruitment documentation from three managers in the furniture manufacturing industry in Northern Alabama. Following the interview protocol (Appendix A) for this study, I presented a list of 10 open-ended questions to participants through a semistructured interview. The use of an interview protocol is an essential practice in qualitative research to minimize ethics violation (de Ceunynck, Kusumastuti, Hannes, Janssens, & Wets, 2013; Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-

Laffitte, 2014). Each face-to-face interview consisted of 10 open-ended interview questions (Appendix B). Additionally, I used my phone recorder during the interview to assist in capturing data and later in developing a transcript. I ensured the recorder was visible to the participants and notified them when the recording began and ended. Building trust was a highly vital component when using the recording device (Speer & Stokoe, 2014). Providing identification of the red LED light as an acknowledgment of the beginning of the recording provided further assurance to the participant (Pierre, 2017).

One advantage of face-to-face interviews is they provide the researcher the opportunity to capture verbal and nonverbal signs, emotions, and individual behaviors during each interview (Speer & Stokoe, 2014). Disadvantages of face-to-face interviews include the researcher's inexperience in conducting qualitative interviews, a smaller sample size, and limited time (de Ceunynck et al., 2013). An in-depth interview protocol included creating qualitative questions or adopting an existing valid and reliable guide for interviews (de Ceunynck et al., 2013). The interview protocol (Appendix A) included conducting the interviews using the interview questions created to help understand the strategies managers use to recruit skilled labor in the furniture manufacturing industry.

According to Yin (2014), implementing the utilization of a protocol constructively affects the reliability of a study. Upon receiving approval 10-18-17-0231079, from Walden University's IRB, I conducted a study involving in-depth interviews. The study included separate focused interviews with manufacturers and recruitment documentation in Northern Alabama to inform and help refine protocol, questions, and data collection. To select a participant for the study, I used a purposeful

sample to mitigate any bias in selection. The ability to practice the interview technique, audio recording, and transcribing serves as invaluable skill training (Baškarada, 2014). Receiving feedback from the participants regarding the procedure provides valuable information needed to refine protocols and processes (Yin, 2014).

Participants in this study obtained a consent form before the beginning of the interview process. The consent form included information on confidentiality and the contact details for a Walden University representative (Pierre, 2017). A consent form signature was required before interview participation or collection of any company documentation. I informed the participants what they could expect during the interview process, and I reaffirmed confidentiality and the participant's right to withdraw from the research process at any time.

I asked participants if they had any additional questions and if they consented to the use of a recorder during the interview. All scheduled interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes at a date and time agreed upon by the participants. I exercised reasonable efforts to accommodate the participant's time constraints to minimize any conflicts with daily work activities for interviews. The interview protocol also included transcribing, analyzing, and coding the responses from participants to help identify patterns and themes (Pierre, 2017).

Providing the participants with a copy of their summarized responses for member checking enhanced reliability and validity of the accuracy of the interview and the interpretation of the findings within the context of the research questions via e-mail (Pierre, 2017). Following up with a scheduled phone call within 1 to 2 weeks after the

interview gave participants the opportunity to determine if the summarization correctly addressed the information provided during the interviews (Pierre, 2017). I provided the participants an opportunity to check the validity of the study findings through member checking. Every participant received a final copy of the findings.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Coding was a process used to organize the data retrieved from the participants interview and company recruitment documents (Brown, 2017). Gross, Blue-Banning, Rutherford-Turnbull, and Francis (2015) identified coding as a means of comparing data. I assigned each participant an electronic folder to store data generated during the interview process and follow-up interviews to maintain confidentiality. Labeling each folder and assigning a distinctive identifier helped manage the data (Brown, 2017). Coding was essential in explaining the link between data collection and the meaning of the data collected (Theron, 2015). I used the same labeling convention to organize all company information. I will maintain the collected data on a password protected data storage device for 5 years after completion of the study. I will destroy the data by shredding or electronic erasure after the 5 years.

### **Data Analysis**

Analyzing the qualitative case study data involved coding and notating common themes that emerged from the collected data (Howard, 2017). I created categories, codes, and organized the data into common themes. Another technique was to organize the interview data into categories and provide a descriptive label for each category (Howard, 2017). Connecting data between themes helped with analyzing the qualitative research,

organizing the data, and comparing written notes and transcripts from recorded interviews (Howard, 2017). I analyzed the collected data from participants creating a comparative analysis. I reviewed the interview transcripts for each participant to become familiar with the data collected and selected passages or quotes of particular interest in relation to the research question to conduct my analysis.

I used open-ended semistructured interview questions to gain an understanding of the topic. The Interview Questions (Appendix B) contains 10 questions constructed according to the research question. I recorded the responses to the questions according to the order of the questions, which followed the research structure of identifying strategies managers use to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. Data from the interview followed the research question, using multiple interview questions. Interview question one: asked what processes leaders use for locating a skilled worker in the furniture manufacturing industry. The remaining questions assisted in identifying the strategy or the lack of strategy an organization uses to locate skilled furniture manufacturing workers. I recorded the response to the question listed on the interview question list to ensure continuity. The answers to the questions presented the effectiveness of the organizations hiring strategy and supply of skilled workers in the furniture industry.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Implementing strategies to address reliability and validity in a study ensures trustworthiness (DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014). A researcher must assess the trustworthiness of the information conveyed in their study (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton,

2013). Qualitative researchers use different criteria to measure the trustworthiness (Leung, 2014). Reliability in Qualitative research aligns with dependability; credibility, transferability, and confirmability align with validity.

### **Reliability**

Dependability refers to the ability to display how in the same context, using the same methods, and similar participants; another researcher would generate the same results (Lub, 2015). Houghton, Casey, and Murphy (2013) discussed the use of an audit trail to increase the rigor of a study. Audit trails through extensive notes related to the research data assist in maintaining reliability (Houghton et al., 2013).

### **Validity**

Triangulation and member checking are two processes used to secure validity in research (Zohrabi, 2013). The methods employed to achieve triangulation in this study included the interview process and collecting company recruitment documentation. Triangulation defines different sources uses to produce the study (Zohrabi, 2013). Börjesson (2014) described member checking as a way of ensuring validity in qualitative research. Member checking allows participants the opportunity to confirm and validate the results and interpretations of the interview (Brown, 2017). The member checking process supports the plausibility and truthfulness of the information (Zohrabi, 2013).

Achieved credibility provides the results of the data analysis that reflect the participant's experiences conveyed during the interview process (Rapport, Clement, Doel, & Hutchings, 2015). Establishing credibility requires attentiveness to the threat of perceived biases that may unfold in the analysis and reporting. Methodological



triangulation increases credibility in a study by the collection and analyses of data from interview responses and company documentation (Brown, 2017). Houghton et al. referred to credibility as the researcher's demonstration in case study designs of achieving saturation with credible processes. Through member checking and using multiple participant sources of data, researchers establish credibility in case study designs (Houghton et al., 2013). I satisfied these standards with the use of an interview process, by interviewing manufacturing managers for sources of data, and using member checking throughout to verify the adequacy of the interview format used. Member checking will also enhance the credibility of the results, by ensuring the conclusion aligns with the participants' intended meanings. Other validity and reliability issues to consider in the instrumentation decision are dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Houghton et al., 2013).

Transferability allows the reader to decide whether similarities are present within the content of the research study (Duggleby & Williams, 2016). Rapport, Clement, Doel, and Hutchings (2015) discussed transferability as the extent that the results of qualitative research can transfer or generalize to other contexts or circumstances. Although transferability is not a primary goal of case studies, it can be increased using in-depth description and diverse population (Morse, 2015).

Confirmability refers to the intersection among credibility, transferability, and dependability (Moon & Blackman, 2014). In confirmability, the results must reflect the participants' voices and inform all themes generated from the data. Setting aside any preconceptions or biases, and focusing on the insight gathered from the participants

assists with confirmability (Brown, 2017). Li and Zhang (2015) highlighted the usefulness of field notes in supporting the data gathered from the analysis of the study. After each interview, I will create notes from each participant's response.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I described the purpose of this research study, my role as the researcher, the participants, and population and sampling, and the methods and processes used to collect and analyze data. I also addressed dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies hiring managers use to locate skilled workers. To explore this phenomenon, I interviewed managers related to recruitment strategies. I collected data through interviews to reach data saturation. I analyzed data collected from the interviews and research data and organized the data using codes. Methodological triangulation from these two data collection techniques increased the reliability and validity of the study. In Section 3, I discussed the presentation of findings, applications to professional practice, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and implications for social change. Section 3 concluded with my reflections and conclusions derived from the study.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore hiring managers' strategies to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry. The labor force was expected to grow only 5% per year between 2012 and 2024 (Levanon et al., 2014). Additionally, employers have had difficulty filling vacancies because the shortages existed in the U.S. labor force (Cappelli, 2015).

I conducted three semistructured interviews with managers from three furniture manufacturers in Huntsville, Alabama to assess the effectiveness of their strategies to locate and hire skilled employees. The semistructured interview questions allowed me to gain an understanding of the topic. Methodological triangulation is the method used to increase credibility (Brown, 2017). My triangulation included the collection of data, an analysis of data from interview responses, and company documentation. The company documentation represents information provided on the company's website. The information reviewed was the company's history, annual profit data, and social involvement. The participants answered 10 semistructured interview questions (Appendix B) that would indicate if they had a strategy to locate and hire skilled workers. I did not use actual names of the participants or their organization. I labeled the organization managers M1, M2, and M3. Once I collected the data, I analyzed the results to identify which organization had a strategy. Based on the methodological triangulation of the transcribed interview responses, company documentation, and my observation notes, the

following themes emerged: (a) strategy, (b) effective strategy, (c) barriers, and (d) mitigation.

### **Presentation of the Findings**

The research question that guided this study was “What strategies do hiring managers to use to locate and hire skilled workers in the furniture manufacturing industry?” After analyzing the data, I identified four themes. Within the themes, I outlined the strategies identified in the interview assessments. I used the collected data to answer my research question. I agreed to conduct the three face-to-face interviews at the participant’s discretion, and the participants chose a comfortable place at their location.

The conceptual framework used for this case study was the skill shortage theory (Green, 2013), which involved matching skills with the demand of a particular job requirement. The four themes that arose from the interviews confirm or reinforce the conceptual framework and extend knowledge of the suggestion that unemployment is a result of a skill shortage. I used themes and codes to organize the data into common categories.

#### **Theme 1: Strategy**

Theme 1 revealed that a hiring strategy was not a top priority for some organizations. During the interviews, strategy emerged as a simple task like going to a favorite shopping center to find a prospect or as complicated as sifting through hundreds of resumes and a 10-step check list to get one qualified prospect. The flexibility in these types of strategies causes a disproportion in the job market, ultimately affecting unemployment. Weaver (2015) noted that skill is a persistent theme in the discussion of

unemployment, which many might assume training or education would resolve. Vispute (2013) claimed that having a recruiting strategy is one of the most critical processes an organization can have. M1 commented that she try to get employees from competitors because they are more experienced. Furthermore, the newspaper want ads were the way to find workers but now they mainly use word-of-mouth: “I do not have a unique strategy but we do post on Career Builder and I search in the community or use word of mouth” (M2). M3 stated, “There is nothing unique in how I find personnel I believe building a good relationship with clients is important.” Although these managers’ strategies varied, a couple of them aligned with Green (2013), who suggested with his theory that linking the demand and supply of skills through labor markets was more productive than typical approaches through institutional networks. The processes they used for locating a skilled worker in the furniture manufacturing industry covered a wide range from sales to warehouse workers. The last few employees were from friends of employees M1 brought on. The process that M2 used included going to their competitors to try to entice experienced personnel. However, posting to ads on social media like Zip Recruiter and Career Builder provides experienced personnel to interview or recruit while out shopping (M3).

## **Theme 2: Effective Strategy**

Green (2013) stated the demand for skills has increased because of the advancement of technology and the level of education in the workforce is currently expanding. Therefore, an understanding of the transition is required to match skills and jobs effectively. I believe we have overcompensated for skill shortage nationally and

internationally and that has made a negative impact on hiring strategies. A report found earlier from South African labor revealed a shortage, but the report did not pertain to unavailable workers the shortage was reported because those workers were not allowed a certification for the training or experience received on the job (Windapo, 2016).

According to M1's strategy, filling out the job application is the backup process because she conduct the interview immediately and if both parties liked each other the person gets the job. M1's strategy has worked, but a skilled person that used the media source for job postings remained on the unemployed list. M2's strategy also included canvassing the local area and conducting on the spot interviews. Internally they had team meetings to identify areas for improvement. M3's strategy involved using the job media sources for finding skilled personnel. M3 also planned to provide training for those without knowledge. Mansour (2015) reported that leadership, competence, and a committed workforce are components of an effective strategy employers use to empower their company to succeed while gaining a competitive advantage.

### **Theme 3: Barriers**

One of the major barriers to personal development or accomplishment addressed in this study was personal biases. I asked the participants what industry barriers had they encountered while implementing their recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled workers. M1 stated that there were none. M2 admitted that the number one barrier for him was finding experienced people. M2 said "experienced people are happy where they are because they receive good pay." Biases are a result of first impressions based on an emotional reaction enforced by interpreted data and events that support our initial

impressions (Jones, 2014). M3 declared, “I do not have any barriers in recruiting.” People have preferences, but many times, they allow various things like globalization, rapid development in technology, demographic aging, and labor division to influence their decision (Obadic & Dragicevic, 2014). A person refusing to use technology that can connect companies with experienced skilled personnel easier than canvassing the area creates a barrier.

#### **Theme 4: Mitigation**

Business leaders who invest in employee training are beneficial to future organizations (Mohrenweiser, 2016). Although a business may not have an immediate barrier, this does not negate the fact that one may arise. Organizations should plan for alternatives in their hiring strategies. M1 stated that she have worked with, or provided jobs to, some interior design students who are trying to graduate or are doing some of their assignments. M2 stressed that it is rough, because to get an experienced person you have to compete with pay and it depends on the scenario you are faced with. M3 reported that the problem she faces is unskilled workers, which requires them to step up on training sometimes. The government has expressed that contributing factors to the skills gap are the lack of talent management and government retirements (Datt & Rivera, 2013). Talent management is about analyzing the need of skilled employees and developing strategies to meet that need (Anwar, Nisar, Khan, & Sana, 2014). In some instances, the participants were meeting a need but there remained room for improvement.

## Analysis

The following table provides an assessment of the organization's strategy expressed by their managers, identified as M1, M2, and M3. The themes captured the answers from the interview questions in the study. The table lists the themes by categories. *Yes* meant the organization has a structured process in place for that category, and *No* meant that they did not have a structured process in place for that category.

Table 1

### *Assessment of the Organization's Strategy*

Manufacture	Strategy	Effective Strategy	Barriers	Mitigation Plan	Evidence of Success
M1	No	No	No	No	Yes
M2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

M1 had no strategy for finding a skilled worker in the furniture industry and that was a result of a recruiting technique using friends or other businesses. However, M1 was effective in getting recruits for work. M1 informed me that there were no barriers; therefore, there was no need for mitigation. I asked how M1 assessed the effectiveness of recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled furniture workers. M1 said in sales it is all about dollars as long as they are selling the volume they are effective in the warehouse.

M2 had a strategy for finding experienced workers, which was a result of visiting restaurants, car dealerships, other sales industries, and posting on job sites. He was effective in getting experienced recruits for work. M2 informed me of barriers but struggled to overcome them. When I asked how M2 assessed the effectiveness of the



recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled furniture workers, M2 said that he measured effectiveness in quantity because the corporate office mandates them to get bodies. The quality is up to the local manager who measures quality according to the daily goals. The store had a daily meeting and based on individual deal accomplishment day by day they can assess quality (M2).

M3 had a strategy for finding skilled furniture workers. The success was a result of posting on job sites like Zip Recruiter and Career Builder. According to the level of experience, the manager would conduct an interview. I asked how you assess the effectiveness of your recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled furniture workers. M3 said they were effective because recruiting was easy however, empowering new hires to continue with the company was a different story. M3 said they did not have any barriers, but they did have a strategy to mitigate the recruits they lose (M3).

In conclusion, the findings showed that if business leaders have a strategy and follow it they would achieve success. M1's success was a result of faithful employees from friends who have been with the company for 15 or more years. M2 was successful because they had a strategy to find experienced workers using job sites and face-to-face contact. Although they dealt with turnover, they were able to fill the vacancy quick. M3 was successful because their strategy was using job sites for posting, screening, conducting interviews, and face-to-face contact. They did not have any barriers but their strategy would assist in overcoming any barriers that would arise.

A company's human resource strategy ultimately is to deliver a highly competitive professional. The findings showed that a company's strategy would

determine their success in locating skilled workers. Green (2013) skills theory suggested linking the demand and supply of skills through labor markets was more productive than typical approaches through institutional networks. M3 assessment, according to the interview questions, appeared more successful in their hiring strategy. M3 linked their demand to media networks and labor markets who maintain thousands of individuals with different skills and levels of experience.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The findings in this study indicated a need for a hiring strategy. The findings are relevant and could aid businesses in their hiring strategy. The findings have the potential to provide businesses with information beneficial to their hiring strategy that may influence their profit margin. The findings may reveal ideas to business managers on how to develop an effective hiring strategy and training program. Businesses that commit to developing a modern hiring strategy may increase community and industry partnership, and represent a positive public perception of the manufacturing industry.

The results from the study could inspire other organizations in understanding the dynamics of an effective hiring strategy and the importance of productivity performance within the industry (Brown, 2017). Public and local leaders are important and could influence change in the hiring industry. Leaders, policymakers, and educators should collaborate to discuss creating a strategy to integrate skills with job requirements.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Social change implications for industry leaders offer an opportunity to establish a hiring strategy or improve their current strategy. The findings in this study display

different concepts used to locate and hire skilled workers. Industry leaders may gain insight that can minimize the bias influences in their hiring. Implications for social change include establishing a credible hiring strategy that provides an opportunity for all skill and experience levels. The benefits of industries implementing an effective hiring strategy are organization awareness, less employee turnover, low cost in training, and an increase in profit. Therefore, investing back into the local communities by hiring more people will affect local unemployment. The employment growth will strengthen the community with the increase in spending which creates a thriving economy. The employees' will transition to a cohort that is in demand and in a more competitive environment for an increase in pay. The increase in pay will provide opportunities for higher education and better provisions for their families.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Strategies for hiring skilled workers are in demand and desired by industry leaders because people make the business. Recruiting is the base or starting point for anyone who has ever had a job. The technique in recruiting should identify the individual and their qualifications and place them in a job where they can thrive. The recruiting effort seems to evolve according to the individual doing the job rather than the strategy. The findings show various strategies used to achieve success without a lot of consistency. I recommend establishing a strategy using network job tools that describe requirements and a response to the individual who applies. I recommend sticking to an established strategy and trying to limit personal biases as often as possible. My goal is to share the results by publishing the findings of the study in scholarly journals. I will provide the

participants with an overview of the results and findings. Finally, I recommend leaders at local, state, and government agencies review the findings to determine if the study results could be beneficial.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The primary limitation of this study was a risk of personal bias. Personal bias provides a window for limitation based on the participant's level of involvement in the study for gathering quality data (Sovak, 2014). According to Sovack, having inside knowledge or experience with the businesses would have provided relevance to the delivery. I recommend using a larger sample size. I used small random sampling and provided the participants with a structured format that required their insight only. The sample location presented another limitation that could have affected the strength of the study. The location of where the sample took place captured the credibility of that particular area which meant the study might not be transferable to other areas of the United States. Recommendations for future studies would include creating a documented strategy updated as education and technology evolve. Most important I recommend identifying techniques to limit the risk of personal bias.

### **Reflections**

The doctoral study DBA process was an enlightening experience. I gathered knowledge in research processes and a depth of understanding with reports of unemployment. My personal biases were limited because I followed the interview protocol (Appendix A). My perceived ideas were averted by the guidance and requirements provided at every stage of the study. The challenges I faced to achieve my

goal empowered me to succeed. The value of the research process and construction of my study have influenced my life in a more meaningful way.

During the interview process, I received an inside view of various businesses' hiring strategies. At this point, I have a better understanding of how the job market affects skilled and unskilled people. The interview process also provided an opportunity for the managers to reflect on their current strategy. From this point on, I will be inclined to share my knowledge during any interaction with business owners or managers that I encounter.

### **Summary and Study Conclusions**

Levanon, Cheng, and Pattera (2014) reported that the unemployment rate peaked while exposing the risk of labor shortages. The authors concentrated on measuring the risk of occupations in industries and regions by comparing the risk of 266 aggregated industries to project labor shortages in 2022. The labor force was expected to grow only 5% per year between 2012 and 2024 (Levanon, Cheng, & Pattera, 2014). The hiring manager's lack of strategies to locate skilled workers was widespread, and employers had difficulty filling vacancies because the shortages existed in the U.S. labor force (Cappelli, 2015).

My research required me to formulate a strategic plan that contained an assortment of data collected from scholarly peer-reviewed journals and official government resources, which addressed the skills shortage issue. My research method included research design, interview questions, ethical research, data collection, organization, and a final analysis. The analysis captured characterized themes, and coding

to represent the business managers. The findings show the benefit of having an effective hiring strategy. Failing to follow the strategy decreases the ability of the organization to perform effective and efficiently.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview: Exploring the perceptions and lived experiences of furniture manufacturing businesses in Huntsville, Alabama

A. The interview session will commence with salutations, introducing myself to the research participant, after which I will introduce the research topic.

B. I will thank the participant for taking the time to respond to the invitation to participate.

C. I will provide a consent form during my initial contact and request the participant to read the consent form and ask any questions prior to the interview or signing the consent form.

D. The participant will receive a copy of the consent form for their records.

E. The tape recorder will start, and I will note the date, time and location.

F. The coded sequential interpretation of the participant's name e.g., 'respondent' will be indicated on the audio recorder (or electronic storage device), documented on my copy of the consent form and the interview will begin.

G. The interview will span approximately 20 minutes for responses to the ten interview questions, including any additional follow-up questions.

H. I will remind participants of the purpose of the study before questions 4 and 7. The purpose of the case study is to explore the hiring manager's strategy to locate skilled workers.

I. Then, I will inform the participant to review the final reports for clarity and provide feedback on the same.

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What processes do you use for locating a skilled worker in the furniture manufacturing industry?
2. What media source(s) do you use to locate and hire skilled manufacturing workers?
3. What strategies do you use for prospect generation that is unique to the furniture manufacturing industry?
4. What target market(s) do you use to hire for skilled manufacturing workers?
5. What is your process to qualify a prospect for a furniture-manufacturing job?
6. What strategies have improved the quality of recruiting in the furniture business?
7. What industry barriers have you encountered while implementing your recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled workers?
8. How did you address the industry barriers encountered while implementing your recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled furniture workers?
9. How do you assess the effectiveness of your recruiting and hiring strategies for skilled furniture workers?
10. What additional information not addressed in the interview, is pertinent to the purpose of this study?